

Poems

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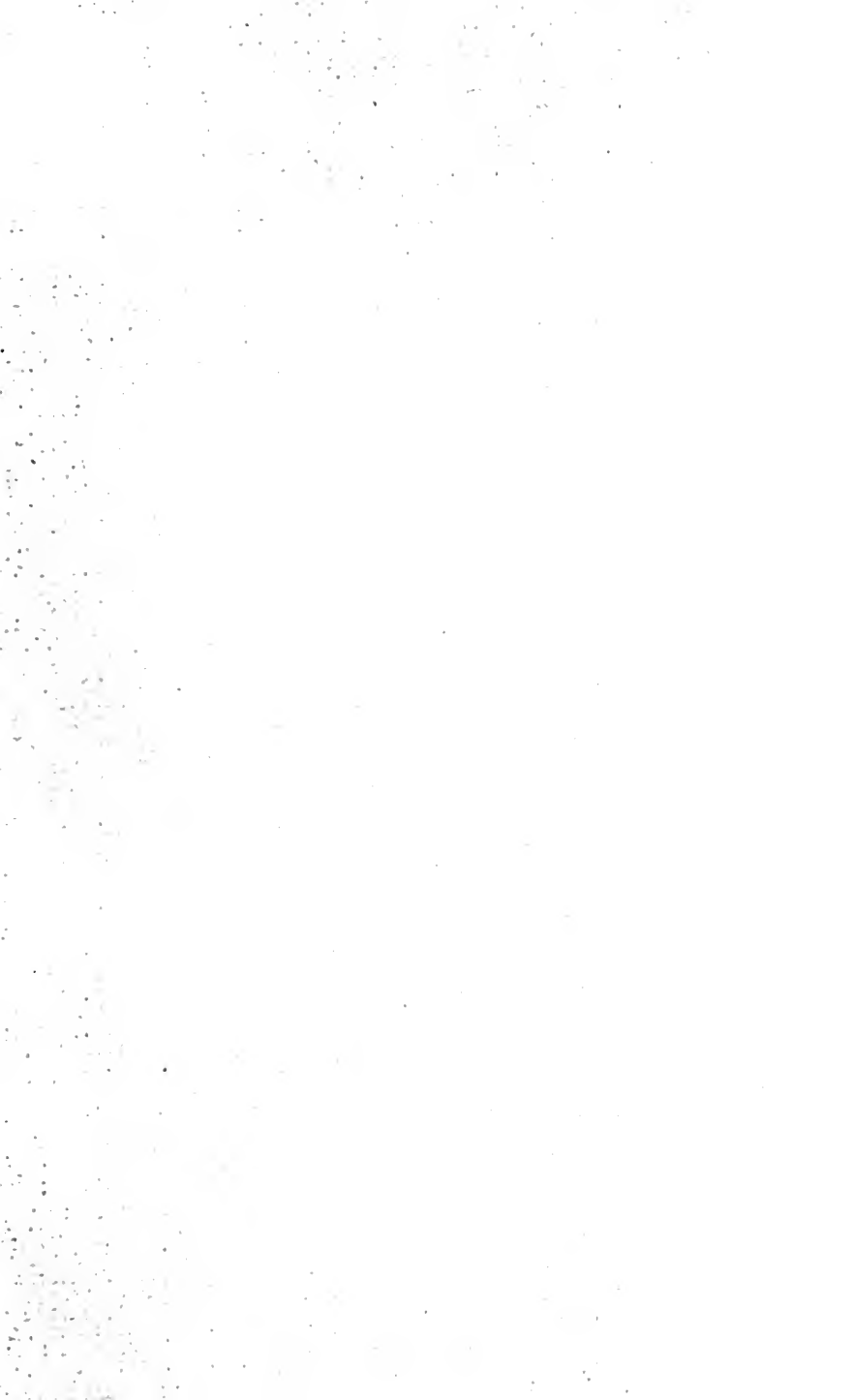
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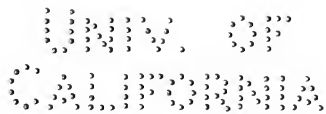
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TO VIND
ANTHONY



Charles James

POEMS

BY
CHARLES
JAMES

AUTHOR OF
JOAN OF ARC
(A DRAMA)



NEW YORK

1903

This edition is limited to
Two Hundred Copies, of which
this volume is

No. 193.....

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By FLORA RAYMOND

NO. 193
LIMITED

HILL AND LEONARD, NEW YORK CITY

This Collection of Poems
is dedicated to the
FRIENDS OF THE AUTHOR
by
FLORA RAYMOND

235118

COLONEL CHARLES JAMES.

The publisher of this selection from the poetical writings of the late Colonel Charles James has thought it not unfitting, whether for the stranger or the friendly reader, to include certain editorials from Washington newspapers published shortly after his death. They are given below:

From "The Washington Post," October 28, 1901.

A friendship extending over a period of more than a century existed between the late Colonel Charles James, of this city, and Mr. John Bigelow, journalist, statesman, and author. Of about the same age, both figured prominently in affairs of the nation many years ago. Mr. Bigelow, who a long time since was Minister to France, later published the life of Franklin, and was subsequently made the biographer of Samuel J. Tilden by the terms of the latter's will, is now eighty-four years old and in fair health. The following letter to the sister of Colonel James shows how highly he esteemed the distinguished gentleman whose death was chronicled a week ago to-day:

HIGHLAND-FALLS-ON-HUDSON, October 23, 1901.

MRS. SARAH V. COON.

Dear Madam: So long an interval has elapsed since I heard directly from your brother that I was apprehensive that the next news I would receive would be painful, but the thought had never crossed my mind that it would be such as was conveyed by you so kindly in your favor of the 20th in-

stant. My old friend seemed so cheerful and content when I have seen him, and his correspondence was always so happily inspired, that I never supposed I would live to read his obituary. I am not sure that I shall ever visit Washington again, but it certainly, in his death, has parted with one of its greatest social attractions to me.

Our acquaintance dated back some sixty years, and was associated with some of the most critical events in our national history, in which both of us took a lively and not unimportant interest, looking always toward similar patriotic results. He was full of talent; he was a born orator, and had a singular influence over men. Of all the friends of Colonel Fremont in the country, there were very few for whom I had such a sincere personal regard.

He used to talk with me occasionally about a record he had been making of what he regarded as the more important incidents of his career, with sketches of the public men with whom he had been in contact. People who are encouraged by friends to undertake to leave to posterity an account of an interesting public career pretty generally get tired of it after a while, and it is remarkable that so few men whose careers in the world have been more or less brilliant have left any record of it except in their achievements. Your brother's life, after retiring from his profession and all official avocations, was so much prolonged that I indulge the hope that the leisure of his latter days was made pleasant to him by jotting down a tolerably complete and consecutive record of his singularly diversified public life.

It would gratify me to be informed if you have found any substantial basis for my hopes among his papers. If, as is probable, any suitable notice of his career should appear in any of the Washington or California papers, I should esteem it a favor if you would give me the title and the date of that print.

I can imagine what a privation his departure must appear to you, and I pray you to accept the assurance of my cordial sympathy. Yours very respectfully,

JOHN BIGELOW.

Colonel James left many papers of value referring to public events in which he participated and public men with whom he was associated, but did not, unhappily, prepare a complete record of his life.

From "The Woman's Tribune," November 2, 1901.

The *Woman's Tribune* has lost a firm friend and the suffragists of the District a staunch adherent in the death of Colonel Charles James, which occurred October 20th. He was eighty-four years of age, took a walk out on Saturday, and his peaceful passing away on Sunday came as a benediction.

Among the few men who from time to time attend the suffrage meetings, Colonel James was a conspicuous and picturesque figure. He was six feet two inches tall, as straight as an arrow, and his silver hair fell about his shoulders. Colonel James during his long life always took a prominent part in public affairs. He was a Democrat in ante-bellum days, then a Republican and a personal friend of Lincoln, Grant, Thomas H. Benton and others of the leading men of the day. New issues having arisen, he ceased to support the Republican Party and was vice-president of the Anti-Imperialist League at the time of his death. He ever stood firm for principle, and in many positions of trust he demonstrated his rectitude and ability.

Colonel James had a most remarkable memory. He knew the history of the country, and that of every actor on its stage, for the last half century, and would often instruct his visitors by showing that the truth of events was far different from the generally accepted version. Unlike many old people who vividly recollect the past, but are indifferent to the present, Colonel James kept the run of current events equally well, and a chat with him was like no other experience, as he poured forth unstintedly the treasures of his memory and judgment.

Colonel James should be permanently known in literature by his drama of *Joan of Arc*, which is the most sympathetic and discriminating portrayal of the character of the Maid of Orleans which has been given to the public. For some years he had been engaged in historical writing and it is hoped that something of this

may be in shape to be preserved, although it is known that not long ago he destroyed a great deal of manuscript, saying he could write it better.

So passeth from our sight a man whom to see was to admire; to know was to love.

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THE WAVES AND THE ROCKS.

UP on the Cliff out from the Gate*
One day I lingered, lone and late,
To watch the listless waters play
Where the broad Ocean meets the Bay,†
And with insatiate hunger swills
Its truant offspring from the hills.

Each lazy wave was half asleep
As he came trolling from the deep,
Coaxing his fellows to the land
Where they would gently kiss the strand,
And then, retiring gracefully,
They rippled to the rocks away,
"Oh, let our dateless conflict cease
And let there be between us peace."

The threatening rocks like ramparts frowned,
Or warders stopping in their round
To scan a hostile, desperate host,
Which though it seemed in slumber lost
Might in an instant call to arms
The castle, with its rude alarms.

Evening was scarfing up the West,
And Zephyrs whispered, "Be at rest."

*Golden Gate.

†San Francisco Bay.

The murmur waked a monster surge
That growled around the beetling verge
Of a rough rock, as if it said,
"I hate the peace that deems us dead."
The rock, in turn, threw off the wave,
Angered that it should dare to lave
With reckless force its rugged sides
That had recoiled uncounted tides.

A billow, that did peace bemoan,
Seeing his fellow thus o'erthrown,
Rolled like a tempest on the rock,
Which all unmoved withstood the shock,
Scattering its wrathful enemy
In gems upon the startled sea.

"Ha, ha, ha, ha," came from a cave,
The fairies clapped, "My brave, my brave!"
The sun went down; the kelpies' light
Flashed fear on the belated wight,
And waves 'gan fret at their confines,
Warning all stragglers from the lines.

Then dark in twilight's muffled train
An awful form swept o'er the main,
Calling its force to prompt array,
To buffet out the impending fray,
The breakers trooped like crested knights,
Cheered on by countless water sprites,
That wrathful called the winds to aid,
To pipe them to their desperate raid.

The tempest, whirlwind, hurricane,
Rushed wildly in to aid the main,
The whirlpool lent its awful force,
The eddies ran their counter-course,

The deep, remorseless undertow
Prepared to swallow up each foe
That failed to make his footing good
And give him to the hungering flood.
The billows formed in strong reserves
To aid the front where'er it swerves,
To stay the flyers from the field,
Who there may die, but must not yield.

Each subject of the gloomy deep
At the dread summons sought its keep
To shun this headlong, desperate band
In its mad war upon the land—
Each to its home where'er it be
In the wild regions of the sea.

The lion shouting, takes the wave,
The otter seeks his highest cave;
The mermaid, sorrowing, dives below
At the impending notes of woe.
The sea-boy by the petrel's flight
Knows it a boding, luckless night.
All things conspire each sense to tell
'Twill be a scene of discord fell.

As thus the deep began to rave,
Echo, awak'ning from her cave,
Summoned each headland of the coast
To beat back Ocean's countless host.

Grimly they stand, like warriors tried,
The coming onset to abide,
And as the squadrons of the deep
Drive at the land with ceaseless sweep,

The rough coast, with its iron hand,
Bars the mad waters from the land.

Though baffled thus, the bellowing flood
Still makes its fearful onset good,
And, as the breakers fall before,
Fresh breakers in the breaches pour.
They storm each peak, attack each fort,
Mount buttress, fosse and sally-port,
Search every vulnerable point,
Of their rough armor try each joint,
And, as they fall, their comrades close
Upon them with avenging blows.
Each echoing crash and hollow groan
Is mingled with the thunder-stone,
While vivid flashes through the night
Give shifting glimpses of the fight.

There was no lagging, blow on blow,
Rained on the firmly breasting foe,
While the vexed armies of the main
To break the coast kept up the strain.

All night the waves to meet the brunt
Were swiftly hurrying to the front.
Eager they went, with splash and sigh,
Low muttering as the fight drew nigh;
But when they met the steady roar
Of Conflict pounding on the shore,
They donned their crests of sparkling foam
To charge the sullen monsters home,
Burst on the scene for conflict dight
To swell the tumult of the fight,
Filled the torn ranks of their compeers,
Mid sheets of flame and thunder-cheers

Bore back the stragglers in their course,
Struck the firm rocks with ruffian force,
Clung to the foe, and in recoil
Brought off their scanty, hard-won spoil.

All night the laboring giant rocks
Repelled the waves' incessant shocks,
Their centres broke and turned their flanks,
And hurled them headlong on their ranks.

But when the Couriers of the East
Brought tidings of the day released,
And, mounting up the dappled sky,
The waves less fierce their onset ply;
And, when the sun an hour had shone,
The crests of that wild host were gone.

ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA.

I.

IN Ptolemy's halls no feast is held to-night;
Imperial Antony has gone to Rome:
Unsummoned slaves, with listless, wandering sight,
Gaze for the landmarks of their distant home.
Slow-wheeling rooks, with lazy, winnowing flight,
Seek the dark forest with the coming gloam,
While every look and outward sign attest
That Cleopatra's Egypt is at rest.

II.

Not so the Queen: within her fearful heart
Swift-fleeting passions hold alternate sway,
Each throwing with remorseless hand, a dart,
Goading with cruel wounds their helpless prey,
Until of her fine mold, the dullest part
Becomes a piece of agonizing clay,
And her unquiet breast is all on fire
With love, with anguish, and with fierce desire.

III.

Wild as the sea, the waves of each emotion
Break on the trembling shores of her unrest,
Whence, swift receding to that fretful ocean,
They rise again with a more maddening crest,

And rushing forward with increased devotion,
They court destruction with a keener zest,
And die, confounded in a wasting strife,
Mingling the billows with the sands of life.

IV.

She seems enchained as to a barren rock,
Where wearying care sits checking at desire,
Hemming her aspirations, like a flock
Of starlings caged, or scorpions girt with fire:
While fate, relentless as a marble block,
Weighs on her constancy, and strives to tire
Out hope and faith, and, to increase her woes,
Adds reckless desperation to her foes.

V.

And now she faces, as a dove ensnared
The fowler's swift approach, her hapless lot,
Wishing that ere with monarchs she was paired
Her home had been the humblest peasant's cot;
Wondering if e'er before a princess fared
A fate so wretched, or if such a blot
Ever obscured affections half so bright,
Or left them wandering in so void a night.

VI.

Panting she stands at bay and pleads her cause
From every feature of her working soul,
Proclaiming false the inexorable laws
That would subject her to their hard control,
And keep her from her doting lord's applause,
Which is her right, and is the cherished goal

That every throb which shakes her laboring breast,
Proclaims to be her hope, her heaven, her rest.

VII.

Her bosom's swell is like a river strong,
Where ambling keels sport with the heavy wind.
Triumphant navies cannot do it wrong,
Riding at anchor, or in battle joined;
Nor the swift whirlwind where destruction's throng
Drive on their victims fleetier than the hind;
The conflict of her soul is mightier far
Than beating tempests or where nations jar.

VIII.

Her eyes are deeper than a golden mine,
Where chambered wealth comes struggling to the light,
Their thronging splendors still on splendors shine,
And the beholder with their magic smite,
As if intoxication, once of wine,
Had played the truant, and was now of sight.
So much the anxious gaze of her distresses
Enchants all objects with its sweet caresses.

IX.

Her voice excels all mortal instruments,
Playing sweet carols with her busy tongue,
Clamoring the story of her discontents,
Like a charmed nightingale above her young,
Chiding injurious distance, which prevents
Her sweet embracements, and like jewels strung

Amidst the pearls of her enchanting lips,
Veils shame-faced music in a grand eclipse.

X.

Love is her theme, a hero is her god,
Her auditors, the world and list'ning time;
The wand she wields, like Aaron's magic rod,
Swallows all others of each land and clime;
It makes the present and the future nod
Obedience to its mystic law sublime;
It crowns disastrous Actium with glory,
And makes it famous in immortal story.

XI.

Listen, how to her maids the "wrangling Queen"
Declares the merits of her absent love:
Scorning as base comparison between
Him and great Julius, erst her earthly Jove.
How, with a womanish, bewitching spleen,
She thrones her wondrous hero high above
All prodigies, proclaiming him her "man of men,"
How Rome to Egypt answers back again.

XII.

"Dear Charmian, will the night again come on
And not return this King? Oh, cruel night,
Canst thou not breathless post quick Oberon
To tell him of his wretched Egypt's plight,
Or coax the lordly, swift-departing sun
To bear the message in his circling flight?
Kind wenches, help me in my helplessness,
And take my blessing while I yet may bless.

XIII.

“Did I love Cæsar so?” “My salad days.”

“By Isis, I will give thee bloody teeth.”

Companion not my lord and monarch’s ways

With his, for whom my love was but as Lethe
To the flooded Nile. Oh, let me breathe!

Unlace me, gentle Charmian, or I die.

Quick, quick! oh, tell me where is Antony?

XIV.

“Is he upon the land or on the sea?

Or leads he forth his battling hosts to slaughter?

How proud the land, how proud the sea must be,

Whichever bears him, be it land or water!

For I declare, as I am Ptolemy’s daughter,

I’d rather share the throne whereon he rides,

And reign the mistress of that hero’s breast,

Than know the joys of countless happy brides

That by their countless lovers are caressed,

Or share Elysium with the perfect blest.

XV.

“Sweet Iras, could I tell thee of the field

Which this all-conquering hero here has won,

How, without sword or buckler, spear or shield,

He rose upon me like the mastering sun

Battling the clouds; what heaven it was to yield!

How when his warrior arms, so sweetly rude,

Clasp me no more comes killing solitude,

XVI.

“Then would thy young blood gallop through thy veins
Chasing the substance of each shadowy thought;
Delicious dreams should pay thee for thy pains,
On beds of sweetest roses thou’dst be wrought
To the wild ecstasy of perfect bliss
And die upon a fancied lover’s kiss!

XVII.

“But language is all vain for such a theme,
Weak, poor, abortive, and those windy sighs
Must feebly speak remembrance of a gleam,
Oh, my poor heart! from my enchanter’s eyes,
Which made my vacant past an idle dream
From which he snatched me like a mighty prize,
Made me an empress in his heart alone,
And to the world proclaimed me to my throne.

XVIII.

“Broad-fronted Cæsar, in my ‘green, cold days,’
I doted on thee with a girlish pride;
Thou wert a demi-god, and on thy ways
Waited all nations, and the mighty tide
Of adulation, not my heart’s desire,
Taught me submission and made thee a sire.

XIX.

“And Pompey too, would fix that steady gaze,
Which awed the world, full on my golden brow,
Until he was bewildered in a maze
Of sweet enchantment, which did aptly grow

His bonds, when—forgetting place and power—
He came a willing captive to my bower,

XX.

“To revel with a queen, whose witching charms
Made conquest pause from taking kingdoms in.
And I, a willing victim in his arms,
Did count it neither sacrifice nor sin
To know this Roman, who, with magic stamp
On the dull earth could raise the bristling camp.

XXI.

“But Antony’s the ‘burgonet of men,’
The ‘demi-Atlas’ of the rounded world,
Love’s master, monarch, and no mortal ken
Before saw royalty wholly impeared
In excellence, for in the art of winning
This wonder is the end and the beginning!

XXII.

“O slow-winged Hope, mount thou the gloomy clouds
That in his absence hang upon my brow;
Untie the winds, and press them to the shrouds,
Sweet Æolus, of his returning prow:
O dear Octavia and great Commonwealth,
Deliver him from seeking me by stealth.

XXIII.

“Proclaim—thou mighty scion of the great—
That Egypt’s Antony’s most royal spouse,
Made so by bonds more holy than the State
Devised, to prop the fortunes of thy house,

For they came forth from out the flaming gate
Of Paradise, love's offering, not from the carouse.
Oh, call them not the vain and vaporing words
Of Alexandria's wassail-loving lords!

XXIV.

"Do this, and from the portals of my soul,
Swifter than thought, shall fly my eager prayers,
That power be given thee from pole to pole,
That heaven may bless thy royal couch with heirs,
That thou delivered be from vexing cares,
Thy fortunes peerless and thy courage strong
To smite the wronger, and to stay the wrong.

XXV.

"How silly 'tis to prate! Where is my lord?
Are there no tireless messengers from Rome
Bending beneath one single, mighty word
From the world's master? Love shall pierce the dome
Of the great Capitol. O Antony, come, come!
Kingdoms shall fade, and, like a scroll, the sky,
But our imperial love shall never die!

XXVI.

"Hark! hearest thou not Jove's awful thunders roll?
And seest thou not the reverent mountains nod?
My lord is speaking! heavenly powers, control!
If he deny me, help me kiss the rod
And then, O Isis, let me quickly die
Without one hope of immortality.

XXVII.

“Throw me, abandoned, on the muddy banks
Of the shrunk Nile, and let me there decay :
Let the rank flies suck my poor body’s thanks,
As they shall bear me mite by mite away
Destroying everything which made men say
‘She is a marvel.’ O sweet oblivion,
Leave not a trace of me beneath the sun !

XXVIII.

“But if he herald forth his swift return
I’ll strew his homeward path with ‘Orient pearls’ ;
His prancing steed, as he the ground doth spurn,
Shall glow with diamonds. Listen ! Listen, girls !
He’s coming to me, how my weak brain whirls !
Prepare a banquet, beggar all the land,
Let Alexandria more than Rome be grand.”

XXIX.

Prone to her couch the royal princess falls,
Her struggles ceasing with exhausted nature ;
Unheeded are her frantic maidens’ calls,
Who strive to animate each fading feature ;
For love, which her whole being now enthralls,
Enmeshes, yet sets free the varying creature :
She roams with Antony in fields Elysian
And feasts her soul upon a heavenly vision.

XXX.

Entranced, she hears her Roman lover speak
Words which her greedy ears alone are heeding,
And though she deems her throbbing heart must break
With joy, yet for more joy she keeps it pleading,

Praying from that wild dream ne'er to awake,
But on delicious viands to be feeding,
While he from kingly glory turns aside
And speaks her fair as his imperial bride.

XXXI.

"I come, my Queen, though Romans call me hence,
'Let the wide arch of the ranged empire fall,'
Not Fulvia's railing nor Octavia's sense,
Nor the young Cæsar's more imperious call
Shall part me from thee, through their mixed pretense.
Leap thou into my heart, attire and all,
And ride triumphant on its pulses, thence—
Of love hold thy high carnival.

XXXII.

"Yes, let it be of love, and in thy joy
Twine thou my heart-strings with thy golden hair;
Braid them in jesses for that hooded boy
Whose power alone makes us a matchless pair,
And when you whistle him down the yielding air
To play at fortune, fickle maid and coy,
Be sure, great queen, be sure you check him fair,
And bring him back before those sweets do cloy,
Which his true subjects only can enjoy."

ONWARD.

A BROOK leaped down the mountain side,
And caroled as it ran :
“I go to seek the ocean-tide,
My race is but a span.

“I am a simple, wayward thing,
Yet tractable withal ;
I am a subject, yet a king,
And subjects heed my call.

“I kiss the pebbles clean and cool,
And wear the rocks away ;
At times I am the sleeping pool,
At times the dashing spray.

“I turn the wheels and drive a host
Of busy, active hands,
And then abandon them to coast
Among the shifting sands.

“My mother was the ocean blue,
My father was the sun,
My sister is the mountain dew
That laughs to see me run.”

And on, and on, and on it came ;
It had been running long,
Its busy work was all the same—
The same its constant song.

I often saw it turn aside
For something in its track ;
But onward it did always glide,
It never once turned back.

I saw a thousand things oppose
Its coursing, and I saw
It overcome its mightiest foes
To vindicate a law.

The statutes lay all open, wide,
And on them burst a gleam
Of light from this fair mountain tide,
And PROGRESS was the theme.

INTERPRETATION.

I SAW a leaf fall from a tree,
Another, and another, three ;
And then a half a dozen more,
And then a dozen, then a score,
And then at least a hundred score
In a swift flood did shower and pour.

The frost had gripped them, and the sun
Undid his fingers, one by one,
And as from out his grasp they slip,
Downward they glide with dive and dip
To the broad earth, and are received
Like penitents returned and grieved.

I listened as they took farewell
Of the tall branches. There was no knell
At parting, and there was no sound
As down they fell. The solemn ground
Received their intermingled hues
Silent, as it receives the dews.

I listened closer, and I heard
A gentle whisper, but no word,
And then a murmur low and long,
And then an anthem, then a song
Burst on my fancy. The refrain
Was mystical, and then 'twas plain.

"Obey the law all must obey,
The frost has come, away, away !"

"But whither?" "Let the winds decide,
Fate is our reinsman and we ride
A reckless race without a fear,
As tempests drive and currents veer."

"O providence of God," I cried,
"Is this the lesson, this the guide,
A forest by the frost defaced
A whirlwind strewing leaves displaced,
Are all the sport of lot and chance,
Is life but a wild, whirling dance?"

A cadence ran across the strain,
Interpreting and making plain
The mystic euphony. And then
The song went on: "O living men,
Take heed of this, a reckless fate
Is but for the inanimate."

'Twas not the leaves that spoke at all
'Twas not their parting nor their fall,
Nor their wild death-dance o'er the plain,
Nor yet their fell destroyer's reign:
A mightier voice than all of these
Spoke through the winds, the leaves, the trees.

ONE NIGHT I RODE 'NEATH SHINING MOON.

ONE night I rode 'neath shining moon,
And gazed upon the peaceful scene below ;
'Twas beautiful—the bay, the dark lagoon,
The placid lake, the shining stars that glow

Like sapphires—oh, that man could know his fate!
And whether scenes like these would meet him there,
That bourn whereto he goes, and will he mate
With those he loved on earth, the true, the fair?

It may be selfish, yet there is in man
A selfish vein which he can never hide,
Army of impulses, it holds the van,
His friends, his fortune, and his chosen bride.

These are his yearnings: is it sordid then?
I cannot tell, but heaven has made us so;
Chide as he will, they will return again:
With them is heaven, and all without them woe.

THE TELEPHONE.*

CANTO I.

I.

EVEN as the trout doth leave his fond retreat,
Under some bank hid from the noonday sun,
And with his tiny feelers 'gins to greet
The moon's cold rays and tempt them, one by one,
Into the flood, with many a graceful feat
To show his spots; so, when the day is done,
Will fancy, loosed by sleep, dart thro the will
And captivate the senses with her skill.

II.

Then will she batten up the walls of thought,
Hamper cold reason, summon her light train
Where, in her airy chambers all is naught
And naught is all, the heat-belabored brain
Throws off its legions from impressions caught
While it was conscious. Vainer than the vain
Are the wild pictures which her skill discloses,
All shapes and shades, from skeletons to roses.

*A fragment of an unfinished poem.

III.

Good Daniel dreamed, and St. John had a vision,
Josephus claimed to, but was such a liar,
And told such selfish dreams, there's indecision
Whether he dreamed or not. Full many a squire
Has dreamed of love and fame, some from Elysium
Like Parisina wake but to expire;
For dreaming, though it's oft of happiness,
Is not on waking always a success.

IV.

Sleeping, one night methought the sacred Nine
Stood close beside me, huddled in a clump,
White-robed. 'Twas June, skies clear, the weather fine,
The moon high at her full, and the time jump
At the dead hour of midnight. I incline
To a belief in sprites and was about to pump
Them with whence, whither and why? when one said,
"Arise and go with me where mortals never tread.

V.

"I am the muse of strange Astronomy,
And make a close inspection every year
Throughout the realms of space. Its nice economy
Will interest you; each separate sphere
Has in one sense its own distinct autonomy,
Yet all are joined, the combination's queer
And not observed; but through the Telephone
We hope for unity in thought and tone.

VI.

"And this shall be our mission. It will take
Perchance a day, the territory's vast.

Of course you will consent for science's sake.

We are sole commissioners; Present and Past
Shall be revealed to us, and we will make

Our own report, whose wonders shall outlast
The vision that revealed them; or if not
The fault will be our own; we work the plot."

VII.

So tempted, how could any one refuse?

Not I, my noble lord. On such a trip
Alone, aloft, with the most charming muse,

And then, to have the reporters on the hip;
They can't ascend. We're off upon our cruise

Quicker than thought, in an ærial ship,
Or skiff,—I really can't describe the rig,—

But 'twas more spacious than a cutter's gig.

VIII.

And as we left the earth, the muses waved—

Those that remained, I mean—a fair adieu.

'Twas comforting, besides 'twas well-behaved.

By Heaven, it was a glorious sight to view!

The earth beneath, and where the ocean raved

Along his shores, cutting with white the blue.

Then all grew dark, then pale, then slowly bright

It dawned a gorgeous planet on our sight.

IX.

And on we steered and veered, nor east nor west,

Nor north nor south; no compass shipped; there are
No points in space, and no dead reckoning. The best

That one can sail by is, now here, now there

As you shall sight the guide you are in quest
Of. We made our course for Cassiopeia's chair.
It's just like coasting. As we neared the moon
Methought I heard a low and hollow croon.

X.

'Twas a delusion, jagged and vast and cold
She gazed upon us, Death in agony,
Grim Ruin's jungle, empty Chaos' hold,
The whelps of Desolation. Can it be
That she can sway the ocean? Not an old
But undecaying, barren eternity.
She seemed sans verdure, mountains, streams,
To glower the home of phantoms and of dreams.

XI.

In her rent sides stood Echo, by her cave
With head upraised and stony eyes all stark.
Her nymphs like statuary o'er a grave
Listened to silence. 'Twas unbroken. Mark
How her peaks uprear, deadly, not brave
Like earthly pinnacles. No living spark
Illumed her face, but pale inanity
Froze there a lecture stern to vanity.

XII.

My guide undid a little bit of coil,
No thicker than a spider's thread,
And shot it at her disk. Instant the toil
Of life was seen upon her, all the dead
Were re-created, fountains burst and boil.
Voices were heard and then a busy tread.

Hark to the joyous and the blithesome song
Of an emancipated and a happy throng.

SONG.

Adieu, adieu, dread, sombre death,
Again we catch our natal breath,
With no release and no decay
Ten million years have passed away.

The Pleiades have lost a star,
But nothing could our features mar.
Silence, sole tyrant of this waste,
Stayed all intrusion to the last.

Hurrah! Hurrah! let all be mirth,
Hurrah for this our second birth,
Hurrah! we live without decay,
Ten million years are but a day.



XIII.

We passed the orb, but kept up the connection
By which we knew each moment what occurred.
A syndicate was formed, and an election
Was ordered in the provinces; then word
Was sent that there was some defection
Among the Indian tribes, but what most stirred
Them up was the Bland bill, which their Tycoon
Declared meant coining glimpses of the moon.

XIV.

From thence we sailed into an awful void

I could not scan, but vast and vacant seemed
Till presently we met an asteroid,

And then across our course a comet steamed,
And then a shower of meteors as if Troad,

More modern Moscow, or Chicago streamed
With fire; but my unwearied guide caught every disk
And aërolite, although the trade was brisk.

SKANEATELES.

There is a tradition that "Skaneateles" signifies "a beautiful squaw," whom the configuration of the lake represents in a sitting posture.

'Tis said thou art an Indian girl, sweet mere,
So beautiful, set round with sloping hills,
Or rather, Skaneateles,—how queer,—
Thou representst an Indian girl with quills

Stuck in her hair, strung in her nose and ears,
Worked in her moccasins, covering dainty feet,
And that, though dead for ages, she appears
Molded in thy translucent waters sweet.

Painted she must have been, and on thy breast
I've seen the rainbow colors bloom and fade,
Crimson at times, they shame the warrior's crest,
Then dark and flashing like an Indian maid,

Then palely blue, as when the streaking East,
Laced by the couriers of the coming morn
Scares off the ugly night, and day released
Leaps into life, a glory magic-born.

I wonder when she lived and when she died;
Who was her mate and why she was transfigured;
Whether he loved her, chose her for his bride,
Gave her sweet gifts, then cooled and was a niggard;

Whether he brought to her the scalps of foes,
A victor's wreath, wove in a coverlet,
And then grew jealous, stamped upon her toes,
And tore this hero-mantle from his pet.

Was she bright-eyed, or bowed and pale with sorrow?
Pale sure she could not be, for bronze forbids,
But what I mean is, had affliction's arrow
Struck deep and left its traces round her lids?

Oh, did she love, and was she loved again,
And did that subtle master hold her fast?
Was her love true, or did he break the chain
And leave her to the winter-chilling blast?

Or was her fate that of the common lot, -
Sunshine and shade, sharp trials and repose,
The beauty of existence and the blot,
The cypress dark surmounted by the rose?

We ask her tale, the rippling waves roll on
Mute of her story, while in heedless mirth
The winds vault high a moment and are gone,
Without a whisper of her days on earth.

SUCCESSION.

BRIGHT morn sprang up and chased the night
Into the regions of the West.
His shadows leaped from left to right,
And then betook themselves to flight,
Alarmed by her unsparing quest.

Her rosy fingers went to work,
Changing the robes of all she met
To every other hue from jet,
Shimmering church spire and minaret,
For Christian and for Paynim Turk.

She gave the landscape its attire,
Smiled on the mountains as she passed,
Fretted their peaks—at first the higher,
Then the least—with living fire,
And burnished up their streams the last.

Over the ocean dark she sped,
Played on its billowy breast and chid
Its boisterous license, and undid
Its combing locks wherein are hid
The forces that give up the dead.

She shot down to the coral reef,
And planted spangles there to light
Aisles, domes and columns, in relief,
Vines, stems and roses, stalks and sheaf,
To awe the mermaids with delight.

Thence summoned up by Sol, she paled
The stars and rove the hurricane.
Whatever object night had veiled
She sought, and with her strength assailed
Each province of his dark domain.

She rent the shroud that scarfed the host,
Surprised the thief, annoyed the bride,
Showed wrecks and wreckers on the coast,
Her rosy fingers aiding most—
To most she was a royal guide.

But after came a lagging train.
Noontide fell sleeping on a bank,
The radiant god, with weary wain
Lashed up the sky, but all in vain,
For slowly he declined and sank.

Pensive, came dewy eve, at last,
And sadly smiling, shut the door.
The ceremony all was past.
Black night his shadows then amassed,
For he was monarch, as before,
And morn must do her conquest o'er.

HISTORY.

I MET a soldier yester morn,
A British soldier, who was born
In Kent, just ninety years ago,
And three: ah, yes, he told me so.
Old father Mepsted, honest man,
And Christian too, who rather than
Do violence to truth would die,
At least I think he would, and I
Know him quite well. And in his youth
He fought with Wellington. In truth
He did, at Waterloo.
Now slowly fades the great ado
From out his memory, and the glass
Seems broken as the shadows pass;
For incoherent will he tell
The little that he knew so well.
As slowly breasting up the hill
He said "Good mornin'" with a will,
He knew me not; he only knew
Some one was passing, and was true
To his fine nature. His salute
Stirred retrospection up, and mute
I gazed upon him, and I thought
Of the great field where he had fought,
Of his commander, Wellington,
Of Blücher fierce, and brave Cambronne,
His guard, the Emperor and Ney,
The ranks there met—Ah! where are they?
—That aged soldier little knew
That he was leading in review

Three buried hosts, and that his toil
Had strangely mixed with the turmoil
Of nations. Such are History's
Written, unwritten mysteries.

MARY STUART.

A VISION rises on my soul ;
In Stirling's Towers a child is born,
Starred for a high, but hapless goal ;
Solway's dread field, a sire forlorn.

Grace, fire, and fate are in her path,
A born and an annointed Queen ;
France's fair lilies, England's wrath,
And Scotland's traitors intervene.

At Fotheringay a headsman stands,
An axe, a block, a severed head.—
The pageant's faded, and there stands
A Queen, unscathed, unmatched, instead.

Washington, D. C.,
July 24, 1898.

DAVID BRODERICK.

"While the dead Senator lay in state, an old man made his way through the throng of mourners that surrounded him and, placing his hand upon his forehead, said, in a voice tremulous with grief: 'God bless you! your soul is now in heaven. California has this day lost her noblest son;' then crossed himself and retired."—*San Francisco Paper, September, 1859.*

COME, comrades, let us gather round the fire, for it's cold,

The oaks are shedding down their mast, the year is growing old;

And one has got a tale to tell, a duty to perform,

That fits the old year's coming knell, mid whirlwind, surge, and storm.

Come, let us hear the old man speak, for wisdom still hath years—

He who stood forth beside the corpse, mid sobs and groans and tears,

And laid his hand upon the brow of the dead hero slain,

And slowly spake these solemn words, these words of faith and pain:

"The eternal God shall bless your soul; in heaven you shall rest;

We bless you from your earthly goal, beyond you shall be blest;

Fair freedom was your chosen spouse, thou wert the noblest son

Of this our heritage and house, thou brave and manly one."

Then crossed himself and went away and mingled with
the crowd
Of thousands who stood round that day with lamenta-
tions loud,
And since that time we have not seen his form nor
heard his voice
Until he comes midst gloom to-day to bid us to rejoice.

The old man tottered to his chair, and we all gathered
round
To hear if he could tell us where one solace could be
found,—
To hear if there was yet on earth one who could fill his
place,
Who battled every hour with wrong, and met it face
to face.

“Brothers,” he spake, “your chief, though dead, still has
command in fight,
Is still the cringing placeman’s dread, still battles for
the right;
And those who, while he stood on earth, could swagger
and could boast,
Now hide themselves in corner holes affrighted at his
ghost.

“Though dead, he speaks! Soldiers, stand firm and you
shall win the day!
Amidst the ranks you’ll see his form through all the
changing fray,
And hear his voice in thunder-tones of majesty and
might,
Proclaiming in its awful close the triumph of ~~the~~ right.

"They little thought, those wicked men who planned
our hero's death,
That he to earth would speak again with more than
mortal breath;
That he was linked with things divine that never can
grow old,
So long as virtue lives to shine amidst the pure and
bold.

"Then let us up to meet the foe, and lay him low at
length,
That all may know the awful power of this dead hero's
strength;
That after ages, too, may know that wickedness and
wrath
Cannot, by doing murder, sweep the lion from its path."

The old man ceased,—a spark like fire came in each
tear-dimmed eye;
A feeling ran through every breast that Broderick could
not die,
That he should be, whate'er betide, our leader in the
fight,
Should live to conquer still the wrong, and triumph
with the right.

ONLY ME.

ADOWN the street
'Twas nod and greet,
Amid the crowd
That clamored loud
He looked at me,
Ah, only me.

'Twas festal day,
And all were gay.
For him 'twas set
To honor, yet
He looked at me,
As I could see.

My cheek was flushed,
My heart was hushed.
Oh, painful plight!
Yet, what delight,
He thought of me,
Ah, only me.

I felt the dart
From heart to heart.
Oh, precious wound,
I almost swooned.
For me, for me,
He is for me.

And when we met,
Oh, precious debt!
I lost my sight,
Harmonious night,
'Twas cloak for me,
Ah, only me.

GRANT.

HE has been summoned, and he has obeyed.
The cords that held him parted ruefully.
As the last gave way, the thud shook a vast fabric fashioned by himself.
The clouds, which the awed winds forgot to shepherd home, watched to the end.
The day drove off the night to light him to the bourn.
His complete life is now the nation's, and men
Will bless them that they were his countrymen.

New York,
July 26, 1885.

SAMUEL S. COX.

Two famous sculptors once had strife
To prove which artist best could fashion,
Idealized from fabled life,
A demi-god in pose and passion.

They brought their work, the expectant throng
The contrast viewed with awe and wonder;
One's lines were rhythmic, like a song,
One scowled a jagged son of thunder.

They chose the first; aloft 'twas reared,
But as it neared its high pedestal
The crowd admired, then sighed, then jeered
"Your demi-god's a pygmy vestal."

Then clamored for the rougher form.
When 'twas ascending from its base
Their admiration grew a storm
As each new glory took its place.

This was but art; kind nature gave
In Cox a man, whate'er the view,
The more we see the more we crave,
And cannot, will not, say adieu.

Washington, D. C.

CLEOPATRA AND HYPATIA.*

(Suggested by reading Draper's "Intellectual Development,"
and Charles Kingsley's "Hypatia.")

THEY are come and gone, the Ptolemies.
Thou canst tell, O Alexandria,
What mankind has lost and won ;
How from the spell of conquest
Science arose, and art, and high philosophy,
How thronged thy halls with learning
And thy marts with the world's greatness.
Earth's blazing chrysolite,
A jewel in the Macedonian's fame—
And thy knell rung by imperial Rome,
Havoc's fell minister ;
Thy streets a hell, a market place for souls.
Adown the centuries the hoarse notes roll ;
Rapine and murder shouts,
Back o'er the scroll,
Time's rugged annals,
As on a promontory,
Two fair women chain the soul,
Cleopatra and Hypatia,
The Ptolemies' goal and
High philosophy's resplendent gem.

*Published in *The Washington Post*.

ÆNEAS AND DIDO.

WHEN Dido met Æneas at the cave,
Storm-driven by the artful Juno's wiles,
His courtesies so kind, so fond, so brave,
Dismissed her terrors and recalled her smiles.

"Swift, swift within this cavern let us flee,
Fear not," he whispered in her burning ears,
"O my dear lord," she said, "no fear's in me,
Your presence is the sudden death of fears.

"A tempest from the skies has driven us in,
But you beget a tempest in my veins,
Baffled in war, you yet in love may win;
Then sue a Queen that's worthy of thy pains.

"Quick, fold me in your arms, Anchises' son,
And tell again the story of thy life,
Begin, dear lord, where Troy was lost and won,
When silent midnight waked to flaming strife.

"Make me to hear Cassandra's boding cry,
See Priam's grief and Hecuba's salt tears;
The care-worn breast of pale Andromache,
The Greeks' hot wrath, the flying maidens' fears,

"The eager flames that did thy strength assail,
As through their darting tongues thou borest thy sire;
Then paint the end, a universal wail,
Not like a city, but a world on fire;

"Thence trace the viewless track of thy swift ships,
The perils thou hast seen by field and flood,
Old Ocean straining at wide Neptune's hips,
And the dread Cyclops thirsting for thy blood.

"What care we for the storm-shod, bickering wind,
The scattered chase, the testy, fretting boar,
The fearful fawn, the wolf, the cowering hind,
Tell it, dear lord, oh, tell your tale once more!

"'Twas that which won me, win me once again;
These envious rocks shall be our bridal bed.
Here, take me, lord, and to thy bosom strain,
The happiest queen that ever yet was wed."

She swoons in bliss, the conscious rocks recede,
Aurora blushes crimson on the skies,
Juno with marriage sanctifies the deed;
But Rumor whispers on the wind, "She lies."

RURAL.

SWEET Chloris on the pasture stretched
Lay tending of her lambs,
While Daphnis at his easel sketched
Stout bulls and sturdy rams.

He drew the monarch of the flock,
The monarch of the herd,
Here rose a hill, there towered a rock,
Here perched the felon bird.

The bees lined swiftly o'er the plain,
The swallows cut them off,
The bulls lay stretched like heroes slain,
When lo! a pretty cough.

'Twas not the lowing of the herd,
Nor the bleating of the flock,
'Twas not the whispering breeze that stirred,
Nor the eagle on the rock.

'Twas like the fairies' pert ahem!
When Puck has made a slip,
And Daphnis' sight caught Beauty's gem
Reclining on her hip.

Her cheek lay pillowed in one palm,
The other held her breast,
"Be calm, O throbbing heart, be calm,"—
Who cannot guess the rest?

Like coursers straining at the bit
The blood leaps to their cheeks,
A voice is heard, "A hit, a hit,"
Cupid, the rogue, now speaks.

Two shafts are from his quiver gone,
Two hearts appear transfixed:
The flowers are blushing on the lawn,—
This verse is getting mixed.

JOVE AND JUNO.

ON solemn Ida's lofty brow
Descended once a golden shower.
Juno said "Later," Jove said "Now."
"Shame! in the sight of all," she pleads—
"A golden cloud is overhead,
And gold will cover every shame
That modesty can think or name."
He had the power, no way but this;
His wily partner, with a kiss,
Receives him in her open arms
And then, when overpowered with bliss,
Bribes Sleep to soothe him from her charms.
Below the Trojans and the Greeks
Embrace each other unto death:
The Trojans fail, the Greeks prevail.
Slow rises up the golden cloud;
She trembles, he is full of wrath,
Cold, slaughtered heroes strew the path
Where fury has been rioting—
Still her denials mock the king.

ENIGMA.

WHAT, in the sight of gods and men,
Saturnian Jove, say, what is this?
Be still, my love, from prying ken
A golden cloud shall hide our bliss.

Quick, balmy Sleep, seal up his eyes,
Thy fee shall be a goddess born.
Speed! fair-haired Greeks, and win the prize,
A city and a wife forsworn.

The eager hosts in close array,
The goddess trembling in his arms,
Hard-breathing Jove and wakeful day,
All pendant on a woman's charms.

O artful Queen! O amorous Jove!
O toiling hosts, O treacherous Sleep!
O day and night, earth, sky above,
Plain, river, mountain, rolling deep!

EVOLUTION.

Two children swung upon a gate,
A boy and girl, Willie and Kate,
And eager in the sport did mate.

A dozen years and Kate was older,
Shyer, slower, sweeter, colder,
Bashful at first, Willie grew bolder.

The gate stood still and Kate would listen,
As Willie gazed into the glisten
Of two dark eyes that he would christen.

A dozen more, two others swung
Upon another gate, that hung
In the same place, and laughter rung.

"O William, there is such a noise,
Send Tommy home, the worst of boys,
Call Katy in, to play with toys."

Will whispered something in her ear,
A smile, a sigh, a grateful tear—
"Pray leave them all alone, my dear."

BILL BURLING'S TROUTING EXPEDITION.

KERN VALLEY famous is for trout,
And from Kern Valley leading out
Are several tributary valleys,
Wider, somewhat, than ten-pin alleys,
Through which small streamlets find their way
Where the shy trout doth dart and play.
These streams are so with chaparral lined,
With vines enmeshed and intertwined,
That a small monkey hardly can
Creep in, much less a full-grown man.
And to break through the tangle
Makes it an infernal bore to angle.

A broker, with commissions fat,
One day took sporting coat and hat,
And with his tackle forth did sally
To "catch" in the aforesaid valley.
Thence coasting up a little brook
He thought to sconce him in a nook,
There with his grog to spend the day,
Landing with skill his finny prey.

Whilst peering through the bushes slyly
He thought the stream was somewhat rily,
And pushing in the cause to study,
He found that it was dev'lish muddy.
"What wretch," he to himself did wrangle,
"Hath thus despoiled me of my angle,
Lost all my labor and no sport,
I'll corner him, or sell him short."

Then boldly through the tangle breaking
He heard a most unmanly quaking.
Thinking his enemy was frightened,
His step grew bold, his quick eye brightened,
When suddenly his angry scowl
Vanished before a savage growl,
And utterly his pluck to ruin,
He caught a glimpse of grizzly Bruin.

'Tis said that time and tide won't wait,
But, reader, had you seen the gait
At which this broker cleared those bushes,
His lamms and slams, lunges and pushes,
His fearful stride on level ground,
And over rocks his awful bound,
As he went packing off that scare,
You'd said that time and tide weren't there;
And to this day, if bears you mention,
Even on 'Change, he's all attention.
Ask him at catching trout to join,
He'll answer, "No, sir; 'not for coin.'"

San Francisco, Cal.

BARTHOLDI'S STATUE.

So LIBERTY at last will have a place—

A very small one, Bedloe's but a speck.

Lot plead for something like it in that race

From out destruction's jaws, a city's wreck.

'Tis thought that that word "little" checked the pace

Of Mrs. Lot, who was not found on deck

When they arrived at Zoar, but was conserved

In a huge pillar, haply still preserved.

Like Marathon, from off this sparkling Isle,

On the "glad waters of the dark blue sea,"

Fair Liberty shall look, long to beguile

The homeward bound and outward from the lee.—

O Commerce, thou art mighty, and the pile

Is not yet reared that can transfigure thee!

Thou art the blood, the heat, the life, the light

Of civilization, its glory and its might!

Oh shame! eternal shame! that thou art bound,

Shame to the charlatans who load thy wings

With tariff and exactions. Thou hast crowned

Nations with greatness! The free wind sings

Shepherding thy peaceful sails, but Tariffs sound

Thy length, breadth, height and depth, and Mam-
mon's rings

Batten upon thy marrow by election

Blaspheming labor with the word "protection."

Pull down the halyards, for our flag no more
Is seen upon its broad and rolling deep
In Commerce's ways. To and from our shores
Come other emblems; o'er our shipyards creep
Rot and decay; the sea-worms bore—
That "infant industry" is not asleep—
While taxing poverty is not neglected,
Theirs is the only labor that's protected.

Brave Ebenezer Elliott looked on Ben Ann,
"Thank God, there is one place on earth," he said,
"Where taxed wheat and paupers cannot grow." Scan
If you will the moral. It is that bread
Will be taxed and paupers made where man
Can profit by it, but where all is dead
Exaction has no office to bestow,
And, if there are no blossoms, there's no woe.

THE TRUANTS.

WHEN Thothmes called the obelisk
Forth from the sleeping rock,
He little deemed that it would whisk
And leave him stock and lock.

But, chiselling the taffy on
To give the fellow lip,
Begot a solemn jest in stone
Unruly for a skip.

So off to Alexandria,
Bold prophecy to wheedle,
He staged it in a roving play
As "Cleopatra's Needle."

There he struck hands with doughty Time
And in a drinking bout
Pledged him "To centuries in chime."
The seventh laid him out.

As prone he fell, he growled "Old boy,
Confound these rank potations."
The grim old wrestler, "What d'ye soy?
Can't take your regular rations?"

He had a fellow just as bad,
Twin brothers in a tale,
The vexed Khedive exclaimed, "Bedad,
I'll give these louts a sail.

“Britannia one shall have—let’s see,
Columbia the other,
And that will fix them to a T,
The daughter and the mother.”

So one nods o’er the busy Thames,
And one o’er Central Park.
These hieroglyphic, heathen gems
Ambiguous and dark.

Embossed with mystery profound
They stare upon each morn,
As if they meant to hang around
Till Gabriel blows his horn.

YUBA DAM.

THE sun was shimmering all the West,
And gilding all the yellow main,
And casting shadows from the crest
Of gilded mountains to the plain,
As laboring up a water-course
A traveler pricked his weary horse;
When all at once upon his sight
Burst a fair village, clean and bright.

He asked a miner, whom he met,
If he could give its name: "You bet!"
"Pray do, my friend, and do not sham."
The miner answered, "Yuba Dam."

"Kind, gentle friend, do not abuse
My ignorance; I cry a truce
To thy bold wit; come, tell me true,
I would not ask it if I knew,
But I, dear sir, a stranger am."
Quick roared the miner, "Yuba Dam!"

Disheartened, on the stranger pressed,
And overtook a mincing dame,
With flaxen hair and silken vest,
And begged of her the village's name.
She oped her sweet lips like a clam
And simpered gently, "Yuba Dam."

On tore the stranger, nearly wild,
And came upon an artless child ;
She had a satchel on her arm,
While o'er her face stole many a charm.
"Where have you been?" the stranger said ;
The maid uplifted quick her head
And answered with the ready truth
And open frankness of her youth,
"At school." "Who keeps it?" "Uncle Sam."
"What is this place, sweet?" "Yuba Dam."

"Alas!" he screamed, in frantic grief,
"Will no one come to my relief?
Will no one tell me where I am?"
The school-boys shouted "Yuba Dam!"
And on the bridge, as he did slam
The planks re-echoed, "Yuba Dam."

"Perdition seize the place!" he cried,
As through the streets he swiftly hied.
Yet ere he went to bed that night,
From something told him by a wight,
He found that he himself had shammed,
And that the *Yuba* had been *dammed*.

WRITTEN IN THE SPRING OF 1901.*

I'd like to sing, if I could coax my muse
To spur her spavined dactyls into rhyme,
Of the great Ship of State, how manned, her crews,
And how she has been steered from time to time
Until she's lost her reckoning; but fear my readers
Before the voyage was up would turn seceders.

Maugre I have the right to have a vision,
Poets have had them, and the rapt St. John,
Who though he's somewhat faulty in precision
And deals in hideous beasts, not found upon
The earth at this late date, he surely had the right
To paint whatever monsters came in sight.

And this shall be my privilege, of course
I am confined to beings here below,
And dare not, for my life, attempt a verse
Requiring high-flight antics just for show,
But skim along to save my muse's wings
And deal with heroes, statesmen, and such things.

Since man began there's been a constant struggle
Whether he should have liberty and life,
Or if his neighbor, coveting, should smuggle
Away his ass and then seduce his wife,
Whether of right he'd have his toil to feed on,
Or be like Adam bundled out of Eden.

*An unfinished poem.

"Root hog or die" is the way that Greeley put it,
And others, I believe, have done the same,
But whether on life's road you ride or foot it
You'll find the travel quite a lively game.
Some think indeed, it is not worth the candle
And shuffle off a suicidal scandal.

The Greek and Roman states are an example
Of what a hugger-mugger tilt it is,
And how the stronger on the weaker trample,
And scout at right and justice as mere fizz,
For there was worked the gamut of oppression
For all 'twas worth to mangle bones and flesh on.

But then they rose to glory, high renown,
Had orators and statesmen not a few,
And ended up by coveting a crown,
And simmering down, much like an Irish stew
Served in the devil's kitchen just to show
His majesty still wandering to and fro.

Mortals, not blind, have seen the lordly sun
Disclose the glories of an eastern sky
With prints and tints like equeuries that run
Before some eastern satrap seated high
To awe obsequious man with regal splendor,
As Saul was startled by the Witch of Endor,

While far below the gorgeous canopy
Are knolls and rocks and trees, a sombre troop,
Awful in grandeur, earth's rude panoply,
And made more awful if an Indian whoop.
And here begins my very famous vision
On San Juan Hill, described with much precision.

ALL HAIL MISSOURI!

(Written on reading the resolution of the Missouri Legislature condemning the war in the Philippines.)

ALL hail Missouri! Hail the land of Pike,
Land of Joe Bowers and his brother Ike,
The red-haired butcher and sweet Sally Black,
Who gave a baker's dozen for one smack,
Of grand De Armond and exotic Vest,
Who graced two Senates, could have graced the rest,
Hail all her sons! She rises in her might,
Says public liberty's a public right,
That Filipinos should defend their bowers
To blood and death, as we defended ours;
Strips the false cloak from false imperial whims,
And "hangs a calf skin on their recreant limbs."
Let every patriot throat in every land
Proclaim her first, the grandest of the grand.

Washington, D. C.,
January, 1901.

THE ISLAND NYMPHS.*

OVID relates how five nymphs, swept to sea,
Rose up five islands, sheltered in the lee;
And how another, most untimely pressed
By her sire's rage, was added to the rest.

With fruits and flowers perennial, all were crowned,
And sweets and herbage charmed the regions 'round:
The offending damsel made the greatest show,
And in her splendor quite forgot her woe.

So, oft it haps that these unlooked-for slips
Fill fame's blown trumpet from the sweetest lips,
As when chaste Juno entrapped Jove on Ida,
And when the truant played the swan to Leda.

'Twas a mad river-god that wrought the change;
If done, the miracle's within our range.
And if we must have islands, why not plant
This virgin seed to meet our virgin want?

We have the cutest germ desired on hand,
Eager for change and burning to expand;
And so, benevolent assimilation
Slides into place without a deviation.

Besides, isles so begot are cheaper far
Than foreign armies and clandestine war,
And no sane damsel would object to be
A blooming island on a silvery sea,

*These lines were written in the spring of 1901.

Where, like Narcissus, she could sit and look,
Without one fear of falling in the brook,
And list to lovers' vows, the whispering breeze
'Neath sparkling moonbeams sifted through the trees,

Where gentle peace shall bless the genial earth,
Birds sing in groves, the cricket on the hearth,
Where bright abundance brings her ample store,
And none are proudly rich, or meanly poor.

But where, oh where, shall this fond group abide,
Kin to what shore, reflected in what tide?
From what proud city shall the nymphs be swept,
What river bear them, in what sea be dipt?

Who'll mix the charm, and what magician bold
Turn maids to islands, islands into gold?
There is but one, great Boston gives the nod,
Lodge the magician, Hoar the river-god.

PRESENT-DAY RHYMSTERS.*

A GERMAN writer, I forget his name,
Scherrer, I think, and not unknown to fame,
Says grace in letters, the poetic art,
Come, trough and crest, six hundred years apart.

By that gradation, if we live and thrive,
We should be crest in Century Twenty-five,
For all who now are in the rhyming trade
Seem helter-skelter rushing down the grade;

For neither north nor south, nor east nor west,
A mount is seen since Whitman scaled the crest
And sang in bolder strain, with genius rife
The unbridled features of our refluent life,

All else seem tame and mingling 'round the pool
Inane and lifeless made by Comstock's rule;
Fly kiting heroes and dull statesmen kite,
Turn thoughts to gold, epochs to chrysolite,

Till tired and baffled by poetic spleen,
One wonders what the devil it can mean;
Yet when the chipper rhymster's at his bout,
'Tis not his rhyming, but his reams give out.

All hail, immortal Muse! If that's too high,
Hail mortal muse! and take a lower fly,
Skim o'er life's plain, adorn what fancy craves,
Exalt the noble, pillory the knaves,

*These lines were written in the spring of 1901.

Sing grace and loveliness, your sweetest song,
Lash bastard pretense with a patriot's tongue,
Conjure the spirit of old '76,
Transfix the liar, and a sneak transfix.

Paint Warren at the front on Bunker Hill,
Stern in his action, sterner in his will;
Give thunder-tones to that too-silent bell
That cheered the patriot, rang the despot's knell;

Revamp the picture of our nation's birth,
Raise all its heroes from their mother earth,
Let peerless Washington adorn the front,
Comrades around, who with him bore the brunt;

Paint creeping near them, with a serpent's wile,
The Arnold hosts that would her sons beguile,
With angry Nemesis just overhead,
Her sabre drawn to strike the caitiffs dead;

And then you'll have a picture shall outvie
In time and art the liar and the lie.
This has been done, and deftly done, by others,
I hail them more than equals, more than brothers.

ON MRS. AMBROSE'S BIRTHDAY,
11TH SEPTEMBER, 1895.

DAYS, months and years go fleeting by,
And cycles follow in their train,
But yet, they only seem to fly,
They all return, they all remain.

Life too, the tide rolls broadly on,
With trough and crest, with ebb and flow,
Billows on billows, now, anon,
They but reform, they never go.

Life's realms have one eternal rule,
Creation, an eternal hand ;
Nature is teacher, and the school
Fashions to her inspiring wand.

And so we meet to-night to charm
A spirit, flashing like a gem,
Be it in sunshine, or in storm,
An ever-radiant diadem.

And nearer, nearer, as we come
To the grand purpose of the whole,
Clearer and clearer, grows the sum,
The light of an eternal soul.

TO MARTHA.*

"Remember the Poem!"

I TRY to wake my sleeping muse, but lo!
She will not answer to my earnest call,
Her lyre hangs pendant from her hand, and slow
O'er her dull eyes enfringed, the lashes fall.

So goes to sleep the twilight in the West,
When the tired sun has made his weary set,
And Night's quick upsprings, throng with their unrest
The gloaming regions of a world of jet.

But when the pale-faced moon climbs up the East
And sets her sober shadows in array,
The dreaming soul may on Night's wonders feast,
And soar to other worlds far, far away.

Even so, half dozing o'er my unwrit page,
I floundered aimless in a world of thought,
Wondering of what I'd write, and on what age,
Of the strange fancies I had known and wrought:

When, on the cloudless vista, gazing west,
A maiden form came stately into view,
An ocean rolled between us, trough and crest,
But high o'er all she walked in ether blue.

*The parting words of Miss Martha Mitchell to the author, on her leaving Washington for Germany to study, were "Remember the poem," reminding him of a promise previously made to send her a poem. The poem when sent brought from Miss Mitchell a picture of Hildesheim Dom and a beautiful letter.

In her left hand she held a parchment white,
On which she slowly traced, "Have you forgot?"
I woke; the vision vanished from my sight,
But not the warning words, "Have you forgot?"

Rouse up, my muse, I cried, 'tis Martha calls,
Quick, string thy lyre, tuned to the sweetest strain,
That ever yet was heard in minstrel halls,
To charm a peasant or a royal train.

Tell Time to break his dial in her path,
And strew the fragments o'er with sunniest flowers,
Crown her with laurel, and take captive Wrath,
To build for her the greenest, loveliest bowers.

Bid Learning bring her store, and at her call
Adorn her brow with wisdom, truth and grace,
Let Diligence and Industry ne'er pall,
But keep her always in the foremost place,
To crown with wholesome deeds a noble race.

Washington, D. C.,
January 19, 1900.

ADELAIDE JOHNSON.

SHE stands alone, without a prop
Against a world of broken hopes ;
In her free veins there's not a drop
Of coward blood, nor one that mopes ;
For her grand spirit sees on high
A purpose and a destiny.

Adoring all of nature's schemes,
She soars above each low-born thought,
And dreaming as the enthusiast dreams
Of grand ideals deftly wrought,
She kneels before the shrine of art
And of its goddess craves her part.

The tumult of life's stormy sea
Awes not her soul, nor brave designs,
For what she is, or is to be,
She fashions forth and intertwines,
Till fate and fortune's fickle woof
Her ægis is and arrow-proof.

Like a tall spire she towers unchanged
Amidst the shifting groups around,
And whatsoever is deranged
Touches her not, nor can confound ;
In her own self she is secure,
A model and a cynosure.

No hapless lot for her is stored ;
She'll have a harvest all her own ;
Nor will it be a miser hoard,
But liberal flung, like blessings strown
Upon a pathway free, unstained,
Though all her life's blood it has drained.

Washington, D. C.,
August 26, 1898.

TO MISS ADELAIDE JOHNSON.*

YOUR messenger has come,
The Queen of Night,
Who modestly doth reign
Among the stars,
Shunning the sun's fierce gaze,
An almost bodiless ecstasy
To charge life's vapors
With ecstatic bliss,
A heavenly incense,
Herald of the morn
And that the soul
Shall with eternity keep pace—
This is your message
If I read aright.

Washington, D. C.,
July 29, 1895.

*Written upon receiving from Miss Johnson a beautiful flower which blooms only at night and is called "The Queen of Night."

TO MISS KATE FIELD.

O KATY FIELD from fair Missouri,
O Katy Field from the broad valley,
Oh wot you how you've treated me
Sin we chance met in life's sweet alley?

You vowed, you swore you'd speak me fair,
You said you'd do it late and early,
But oh, you marvel silent girl,
Have you forgot your promise fairly?

Dear Katy, life is ebbing fast
And faster as the goal we near it,
We fly as 't were to a repast
For vain and foolish 't were to fear it.

Then cheerful to it let us go,
Blythe, scaling dikes and clearing ditches;
To intermingle scatters woe
As whistling scatters ghosts and witches.

Then don't be silent any more,
Vilas, the post-boy, is for use,
The surplus force he has in store
Pray utilize and make a truce.

For you're a pride 'mang men and girls
And a' your ways are blythe and bonny,
And a' your path is strewn with pearls
And graces dripping sweet as honey.

Fair Katy Field, God bless the day
That we chance met in life's thronged valley,
For it has brightened up the way
As sounds make cheerful Echo rally.

New York City,
May 27, 1886.

RECEIPT FOR A CHECK.*

DEAR FANNIE:

We're in clover now
Howe'er misfortune grieves,
And send you for your bank account
A knife to cut the leaves.

But we have not one bank alone
Subject to Friendship's call,
But Fannie Banks Unlimited
With store enough for all.

And in our hearts a mighty wish
Doth half imprisoned shine
With cords of love to twine with yours
For days of auld lang syne.

Washington, D. C.,
December 28, 1893.

CHARLES JAMES.

*Written on receiving a check in the following terms:

No. P30472

New York, Dec. 22, 1893.

THE BANK OF FRIENDSHIP UNLIMITED,

Goodwill Square Branch.

Pay to the Order of Charles James

One Thousand Hearty Greetings.

G 1,000

FANNIE E. BANKS.

TO MRS. HELEN L. SUMNER.

WAITING, waiting, gentle spirit,
Waiting for the call,
Doing deeds of love and kindness,
Charity to all.

'Tis not waiting, it is flying,
Healthful, wholesome, to a goal,
On the mighty plan relying,
Light is breaking on the soul.

Ocean, river, valley, mountain,
Into splendor roll each morn.
Loyally they greet the fountain,
Light of which the earth is born.

Search it out, its hidden wonders,
Whence it is, and what it means,
Through the misty clouds it thunders,
Tear away the gauzy screen.

Constant as the star that guideth
All the barks that ride the sea
Is the spirit that abideth
Where we honor it, in thee.

Washington, D. C.,
September 1, 1897.

TO MRS. JENNIE L. MUNROE.

NATURE'S laws encompass all,
By Nature, I mean God,
The all in one, and one in all.

There's nothing can be said or writ
Within the range of human wit,
Has not been writ or said before.

Within the fold of Nature's laws
We find ourselves, nor know the cause,
But nothing fails, there is no pause.

Onward we move within the train
And fancy we may meet again ;
In the grand march there is no wane.

All know you have a noble trend,
You would not mar, but you would mend ;
'Tis compassed in the name of Friend.

Washington, D. C.,
January 1, 1898.

TO MISS NELLIE AMBROSE.

I KNOW a young woman
Who is always engaged;
Like the light of the morning
She cannot be caged.
Like the light of the morning,
Without any staging,
Whenever you meet her
She's always engaging.

Washington, D. C.,
April 18, 1894.

TO ELLEN AURELIA OPHELIA.

(Written upon receiving from Nellie Ambrose, at Christmas time, a box containing cake made by her own hands, and a piece of mistletoe.)

A MISTLETOE without a kiss,
You flout me for no Hobson,
But I'll be there, high-headed Miss,
Whenever that big job's on.

TO NELL.

I KNOW a girl who said she'd write
But didn't keep her promise, quite,
For these small slips she's "out of sight,"
And would not even to Cæsar render
One half his right.
I cannot defend her.

But, try her on another tack,
Just give her politics a whack,
Or her religion, and smack, smack,
She's foremost in
To give your liveliest wits a crack
And make them spin.

But yet, I really like the girl,
'T would set your senses in a whirl
To see her trig from heel to curl
Out on a fly to grace the worl',
And make it better,
Although she treats me like a churl—
Her promised letter.

Washington, D. C.,
August 29, 1896.

TO ANNIE.

(This poem was written on receiving the following:

“Data for a poem by Colonel James.

“A sunshiny day in South Carolina. A combination of tall oak, mistletoe and mocking bird. Two Washington tourists pausing in the middle of sidewalk to look and listen. Sudden arrival around the corner of a Wheelman without a Bell. Hasty dismounting on part of B. W., quick return to real life on part of T. W. T., profuse mingling of apologies—southern and northern—on part of all.

“To be written when Inclination says ‘Ready’ and forwarded to A. L. Ambrose, Aiken, S. C.”)

I’m not wound up, my lady dear,
And if I were, it is not clear
That I could riddle out the group,
My Muse soars high, she’s hard to stoop.

Far more in comets, she delights,
And moonshine nymphs and mountain sprites,
Or fairies dancing round a spring,
And if she were to cour her wing
’Tis not of bicycles, she’d sing.

The lofty oaks, she might take in,
And mistletoe and mocking bird,
And tourists too, but ’twould be sin
To plank her on the sidewalk hard,
There to screech out, like Jacky Horner,
A brave boy’s triumph in a corner.

No, my fair Coz, give for a theme
A soaring planet, or a dream,
Satan transformed, at war with sin,
Or some aërial harlequin
Riding a tempest for a lark,
Leander on his fatal spark
To Hero o'er the Dardanelles,
Or witches, naiads, sylphs and spells,

Or whatsoever scene may strike you,
But more exalted, and more like you,
I'll loose the jesses of my Muse
And whistle her off upon the cruise.

TO SARAH.

(Written after sleeping under a comfort sent by the author's sister, Mrs. Sarah V. Coon, as a Christmas gift from Chicopee, Mass.)

MY fancy flew o'er hill and lea
To bright and joyous Chicopee,
There Tuttle, with his genial smile,
His winning partner, without guile,
His charming daughter, full of grace,
Jim, with his sober, honest face,
Burke, pen and ink poised o'er his book,
Spit-fire Louise, with scornful look,
Elizabeth, with graceful mien,
And worshiped Sarah, glorious Queen,
All gave me greeting fair and true,
Deeming the courtesy was due.
It warmed my slow and sluggish parts
To meet such true and faithful hearts.
I woke at dawn, brimful of glee
At fancy's sketch of Chicopee.

Washington, D. C.,
December 24, 1900.

A LETTER.

DEAR FANNIE:

“Flies” or no flies, there’s not a day
But that I think of you and pray
That you may keep your spirits gay.

I know I should have written sooner,
But I am not a letter donor,
In fact, I do not pay my debts,
And she that gets a line from me
May be assured she nuggets gets—
Not gold from Klondike—love from me.

Then to that priceless heritage,
A spirit that can never age,
That will not thunder in the bass,
Nor on the “small notes” leave a trace
To mar their symphony or grace,
I pay the tribute of a sage.

And so I send this billet-doux
That flies from me, and flies to you.

CHARLES JAMES.

Washington, D. C.,
February 16, 1898.

THE DRAMA THIRTY YEARS AGO.*

Miss Agnes Ethel, as Frou Frou, on her benefit night at the Fifth Avenue Theatre, Monday, April 25, 1870.

O HAPLESS Frou Frou! thoughtless, fond and vain!
Indulgence was thy sentinel—thy bane.
Tho' not a wanton, yet a wanton's fate
Thou found'st—and found'st remorse, alas, too late!
'Tis not the "common lot," still let us hope!
Yet 'gainst what odds must thoughtless virtue cope!
Child, maid, wife, mother—happy unreviled—
Mistress and outcast, wretched and defiled—
May be the fate of any—who can tell
Why one's exalted, why the other fell?
Fate fashions destinies, and on her track
There's an abiding, ever-lurking pack
That will not let the weary wanderers rest,
By wants and trials puzzled and distressed,
That follows close where'er they wend their way;
And if they falter, has them still at bay;
Will show no mercy when they trembling fall—
But sweeps the hand of ruin over all!
God, in Thy mercy, spare such if Thou wilt!
But man deals vengeance for their nameless guilt!
Wouldst learn to shun the wrong and choose the right,
And 'gainst temptation wage the victor's fight?
See Agnes Ethel paint with living fire
The death-bed where unguarded hopes expire!

*Published in *The Washington Post*, April 25, 1900.

How art can rival nature and forestall
Her lessons, rounded by the bitter fall!
How with a more than master's hand she draws
The line where weak frivolity must pause
Or take the unerring sentence of the Just—
"Thy hopes are embers and thy fancies dust."
Whose skill can rob pollution of its taint,
And make sin-stricken guilt a teaching saint,
Whose power is passion, master'd to her will,
Taught to inspire, refine, exalt, and thrill,
Whose every action is a victor's wreath—
A moral warning from a living death —
Whose final triumph, in the tragic close,
Is cypress dark, transfigured to a rose!
And chastened, as you see the curtain fall
Know that bright Ethel is the life of all.

(The play had been running for nearly one hundred nights; popular interest had not abated. The press was bounteous in its praise; the *Herald* said it was a success in every respect, that its reign had been golden, and the lovely queen had royally worn her honors. After the performance, a banquet was given, at which the mayor of the city, with Miss Ethel on his right, presided. Congratulatory speeches were made, and what is known as legitimate drama had a triumph, such as might have reminded one of the days of Siddons and of Sheridan. There are indications that it may return.)

IN THE CATSKILLS.*

(To Mrs. Agnes Ethel Tracy.)

THE moon rose slow o'er Kaaterskill,
I wandered in a lonely walk,
A living presence seemed to fill
All nature, animate but still,
Bent, mute, and listening to a rill
That gurgling seemed full of talk.
Its babble was of ancient days,
When giant nature piled the rocks,
Fashioned the dells and waterways,
And heaved with her primeval shocks
The broad-backed mountains to the clouds,
And clothed them in their misty shrouds,
Mingled with fancy's airy forms
That puffed the winds and trooped the storms
And swarmed at dawn across the glade
And sought at noon the grotto's shade,
And then, as fairies in a ring,
Wove moonlit dances 'round the spring,
Till Pan's sharp notes broke up the mirth
For Nymphs of less ethereal birth
Who basked in groves and bathed in floods,
While Fauns and Satyrs roamed the woods,
Forecasting, as the scheme unfurled,
Plan after plan, a peopled world.
Then came a race tall-built and spare,
Brown children of the sun and air,

* Published in *The Washington Post*, October 2, 1900.

Kindred by comradeship and thought
To all the wonders nature wrought.
Swift-footed as the leaping stream
And agile as the quivering beam
That chases from the mountain's height
The lagging couriers of the night,
Well trained in arms for war or chase—
Then veered the tale and in their place,
Like magic, came a fairer race;
And in their midst a graceful Queen,
As brilliant as the summer's sheen
That glances through the greenwood trees,
Ornate with dignity and ease,
Where in her rural Bungalow†
High thoughts abound and wit doth flow,
And sweet refinement mingles grace,
And minds o'er-taxed find resting place,
Mid social joys that humble pride,
And where a minstrel might abide,
Patroned, as by the fair Buccleuch,‡
With ladies' smiles and praises too—
But here the clamoring midnight bell
Cut short the tale, dissolved the spell;
The babbling sounds died in mine ear,
The stream grew silent, smooth, and clear.

† Mrs. Tracy's summer home in the Catskills.

‡ Anne Scott, Duchess of Buccleuch, in "Lay of the Last Minstrel."

TO AGNES.

THE bee steals from the flower;
The flower steals from the dew.

But whence the dew? Through night's long hours
Bright fairies breathe it on the flowers.
One told me so at trysting time,
When vesper bells swing heavy chime,
And so I tell the tale to you.
They are the shimmering nymphs of light
Begotten of the moonbeams bright
Upon the breast of starry night.

They hold their court by rock and fell,
They dance about the roaring linn,
And then they swarm o'er hill and dale,
And breathe the sweets the flowers inhale,
As playful zephyrs gather music's charms,
As spirit fires the blood that beauty warms.

But when the stag springs hasty from his lair,
Rears high his antlers, sniffs the bracing air,
And listens to the stirring hunter's horn,
Which tells the chase is up, the day is born,
They vanish in its circumambient beams,
As waking thoughts drive off unwaking dreams,
And then their latent sweets are gathered in
By the wild bee with hum, and buzz, and din.

Washington, D. C.,
February 19, 1901.

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